

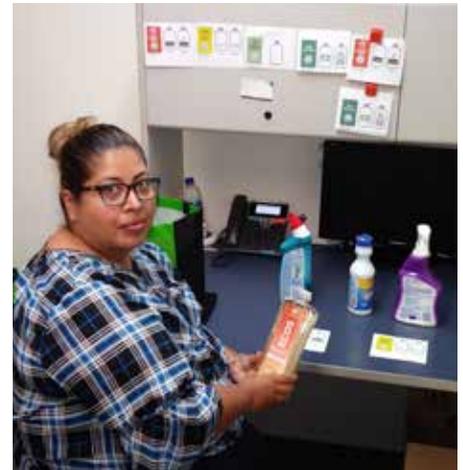


Sea Mar HEALTHY HOMES TRAINING

2021

Sea Mar Community Health Centers (Sea Mar), a community-based organization, is committed to providing quality, comprehensive health, human and educational services to diverse communities, specializing in service to Hispanics and Latinos.

The Hazardous Waste Management Program (Haz Waste Program) offers education, assistance, and incentives to businesses and residents of King County to reduce hazardous and toxic material exposures where people live and work around the county.



OVERVIEW

For the third consecutive year, the Haz Waste Program partnered with Sea Mar to teach safer cleaning practices to Spanish-speaking immigrants in South King County.

This partnership is the result of years of working with and listening to community leaders' concerns about the overuse of disinfectants for household cleaning and the hazards of mixing chemical cleaning products. In response, the Haz Waste Program worked alongside Sea Mar to create a training program to teach safer ways to clean homes, ultimately aiming to reduce hazardous material exposures among Hispanic and Latino families. The Haz Waste Program is committed to serving all people who live and work in King County and ensuring that race is not a determinant of hazardous exposure. This project is in alignment with Haz Waste's vision and mission.

The objectives were to

- increase awareness of the health risks of using bleach and mixing different cleaning products;
- learn how to identify whether a household cleaner is hazardous or safe; and
- change cleaning practices from using hazardous cleaning products to safer cleaning products.



Sea Mar recruited and trained participants from 11 South King County cities and unincorporated King County. All were immigrants representing nine Latin American countries.

“I didn’t know until [Sea Mar] taught me to read the products’ labels.”

Trainings

Trainings were conducted in Spanish by Spanish-speaking immigrants. The trainings were originally designed to be presented in participants’ homes, but due to COVID-19, Sea Mar conducted them virtually using WhatsApp or Zoom.

Sea Mar visited 90 homes, reaching a total of 285 people living in those the homes. Before each training, Sea Mar asked participants eight questions to evaluate their awareness of the hazards of some cleaning products.

Increasing awareness that some products and situations can harm health

The Sea Mar team began the training by describing to participants some of the symptoms that certain cleaning products can trigger the harmful health impacts these products could have on participants or their family members. Many participants reported that they experienced some of these unhealthy symptoms while using cleaning products.

Sea Mar also raised awareness around the health hazards of mold in a home.

Learning to identify if a cleaning product is safe or hazardous

The participants then gathered their cleaning products and, under the guidance of the trainers, learned how to identify if the products they regularly used could be hazardous to their health or their family’s health. Some participants were surprised to find that many - if not most - of their cleaning products had a signal word indicating that the product could be hazardous.

“I read the labels [now], and I pay attention to the warning it has.”



Practicing safer cleaning

The Haz Waste Program provided a safer cleaning kit to participants. These kits included a bottle of white vinegar, baking soda, an EPA Safer Choice dish soap, a sponge, a high-quality microfiber cloth, and a recipe card.

Participants then practiced making and using safer cleaning products. At the end of the training, Sea Mar trainers asked participants to sign a pledge to use safer cleaning products in one area of their home for two months. All 90 participants agreed to do this.



Workshops

Sea Mar also partnered with Casa Latina and United Catholic Women to conduct two workshops on Zoom. They trained 28 participants from four Latin American countries. They also partnered with the Mexican Consulate to do a training on Facebook Live. As of October 20, 2021, this training has had 858 views on the Mexican Consulate’s Facebook page.

RESULTS

Two months after the training, Sea Mar contacted the 90 participants they had trained to ask the same pre-training awareness questions again and gauge what participants had learned since attending trainings. Of those 90 participants, 79 answered the follow-up questions. All results are based on the 79 people who took the training and completed the before and after surveys.

"My allergies have stopped."



"We do not have breathing problems anymore..."



90 participants/79 surveyed/two months after the training

BEFORE		AFTER
100% 	Use bleach to clean	46% 
	Improved Health	67% 
5 	Can identify if a cleaning product is hazardous	65 
72 of 79 not mixing cleaning products	78% make own cleaning products with Sea Mar provided-kit	90% still using safer cleaning products they pledged to use

"Before, I had burning in my throat, and my eyes hurt, but since I stopped using bleach, I feel better."



"I have more energy."





The Haz Waste Program would like to thank the Sea Mar team, Ninfa Quiroz, Yanin Diaz, Martha Acuna, Martha Cadena and Maricela Guevara for the positive impact they had on their community. Results indicate not only increased awareness of harmful cleaning products among training, participants but also improved health for more than half of the participants. The number of participants who can now identify a safer cleaning product in the store and understand how to make their own cleaning products also increased. We look forward to our continued partnership in 2022!

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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